

file: Central Intelligence - Origins

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This Annex should be attached to document SC-172, "Development of a National Intelligence Program", ANNEX IIX which is on the Agenda for the meeting of Tuesday, November 20. (SC-172)

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November 19, 1945

Comparison of Plans for Coordinated or Centralized Intelligence

1. Several plans for a "Central Intelligence Agency" have been advanced. At present two are under consideration:

a. A State Department Plan, proposed to the Secretary of State by the Special Assistant for Research & Intelligence, which in its main outlines is similar to a plan prepared by the Bureau of the Budget; and

b. A War Department Plan, proposed by a Board headed by Assistant Secretary Lovett, which in its main outlines is similar to a plan originally prepared by the Joint Intelligence Committee and recently approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

2. The two plans are in agreement on the following essentials:

a. That the responsibility for foreign intelligence planning and policies must be placed at a high point in the Government, i.e., in a Cabinet Committee, headed by the Secretary of State;

b. That the employment of "secret" or clandestine intelligence methods is necessary in order to insure adequate intelligence coverage of at least some foreign countries, and that responsibility for "secret" intelligence should be vested in a central or interdepartmental agency, rather than in any one Department;

c. That there are some service functions in intelligence work which might be performed with advantage and economy by a central or interdepartmental agency; and that permanent interdepartmental machinery, so set up as to permit the prompt performance of a centralized operation in particular cases, is desirable;

d. That

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d. That coordination of all foreign intelligence operations of the Government is essential;

e. That the responsibility for coordination and for the direction of centralized operations should be vested in a single individual reporting to the Cabinet Committee; and

f. That the responsibility for "strategic intelligence"-- the findings of fact upon which policy and operations at the Government level are to be based-- must be fixed at a definite place in the Government.

3. The two plans differ in details, in the degree of elaboration of the proposed machinery, and in the following respects:

a. As to the composition of the top authority;

b. As to the method of selection of the individual who heads up the central machinery; and (apparently)

c. As to the place where the final responsibility for "strategic intelligence" rests.

Those differences reflect different views with respect to (1) the role of the State Department and (ii) the relation of security intelligence (or "counter-intelligence") to "positive" intelligence.

4. The War Department plan vests responsibility for the whole field of intelligence in a single Authority. The State Department plan separates the field of security intelligence and puts it under a separate Authority, in which two additional Departments, Treasury and Justice, are represented. It recognizes the necessity for coordination between the two fields by giving the two Authorities a common Secretariat and by putting a single Executive in charge of both secret intelligence and counter-espionage. This rather complicated structure, with two Authorities at the top, is designed to accomplish the following results:

a. Concentration of responsibility for all intelligence planning and policy, except for security intelligence, in State, War and Navy; and

b. Inclusion

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b. Inclusion of Treasury and Justice in the Security Authority.

It is believed undesirable to include Treasury and Justice in the Intelligence Authority; on the other hand, it is believed that coordination in the fields of security and security intelligence cannot be achieved without their participation at the top, because of the important roles which they play in those fields.

5. Another reason for the separation of the two fields is that it is desirable for the Intelligence Authority to concentrate on foreign intelligence and to keep out of all domestic matters; whereas it is impossible to draw so sharp a distinction between foreign and domestic matters in the security field, since domestic security is the end objective. In this connection it should be emphasized that the counter-intelligence (or, more accurately, counter-espionage) operation, which under the State Department plan would be conducted by the central organization, is a foreign operation purely. Domestic security operations would continue to be carried on by the FBI, the Coast Guard, Secret Service and other Treasury agencies, and by the counter-intelligence organization of the Armed Forces. Thus the Security Authority would function on policy in a much wider field than that of the C/I unit of the central organization.

6. The other major differences between the two plans relate to the role of the Department of State. The War Department plan calls for a 4-man Authority composed of the Secretaries of State, War and Navy and a representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for a Director appointed by the President upon recommendation of the Authority, and for an Advisory Board to assist the Director, composed of the Service intelligence heads and a representative of the State Department. The Advisory Board may be overruled by the Director but differences of opinion with the Director may be taken on appeal to the Authority through the machinery of the central agency. Thus the Armed Services have a 3 to 1 vote in the governing board and the independence of the Director may be illusory, because the intelligence chiefs of the Services have such a variety of mechanisms for influencing him, viz.,

a. Their own Departmental machinery, through the Secretary as a member of the Board;

b. The

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b. The machinery of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, through the JCS member of the Board; and

c. The Advisory Board and its appeal procedures.

This preponderance of military influence in the War Department plan is inconsistent with and contrary to the proper role of the State Department as the agency primarily responsible for formulating policies and conducting operations in the field of foreign affairs.

7. The State Department plan gives the Service Departments a 2 to 1 vote in the Intelligence Authority but contemplates that the leadership and final responsibility shall rest in the Secretary of State and puts the executive direction of the central agency in an official of the Department of State.

8. The State Department plan also vests in the State Department the responsibility for what the War Department plan calls "strategic and national policy intelligence," i.e., the preparation of reports and estimates for action or policy determination at the Government level. Provision is made for representatives of the War and Navy Departments to assist in performing that function. The War Department plan does not make an unequivocal statement on this subject but the following paragraph g of the list of functions of the Central Intelligence Agency suggests that that agency is to be responsible for the strategic estimates:

"g. Accomplish the evaluation and synthesis of intelligence collected or assembled by it, and the appropriate dissemination within the Government and among the several departments of the resulting strategic and national policy intelligence."

9. The State Department plan is based upon certain premises which the undersigned considers to be sound and demonstrated by experience:

a. That the big problems of post-war intelligence are:

(1) To fix responsibilities for the intelligence that

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that will affect our foreign policies, including our military policies;

(2) To determine whether, to what extent and under what limitations this Government will engage in secret or clandestine intelligence operations in foreign countries, and (if we are to do so) to build up an organization in that field; and

(2) (3) To provide a continually functioning mechanism for planning our foreign intelligence activities, assigning missions and seeing to it that the jobs get done.

b. That the critical operation in intelligence work is performed at the research desk; that while we need to enlarge and develop our sources of information, our efforts along that line will be futile unless we have competent research organizations to translate our intelligence needs into specific information requirements; and that, on the other hand, a multiplication of inflowing information will be of little value unless we have skilled intelligence research personnel to sift it, put it together, check what is doubtful, record and compile what is useful and, finally, to report what is important directly and promptly to those whose operations or policy decisions might be affected by it.

c. That there is no such thing as intelligence in the abstract--"intelligence" being the sum total of all relevant information on a particular problem--and that therefore the concept of one central repository of all information needed by the Government on all foreign matters is fundamentally unsound;

d. That accurate and timely foreign intelligence, which is the objective, requires the participation and cooperation of many agencies of the Government; and that the best method of attaining that objective is to develop and employ the specialized resources of those agencies, rather than to create new agencies; and

e. That, therefore, coordinating machinery, designed to employ and improve all the resources of existing government agencies (and, incidentally, to make all of

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them more intelligence-conscious) should get primary attention in any post-war intelligence plan.

10. Upon the foregoing premises rest the essential factors of the proposed State Department plan:

a. Assignment to the State Department of the primary role in foreign intelligence, including the responsibility for "strategic or national policy intelligence";

b. Primary emphasis upon the coordinating functions of the central agency; and

c. Restriction of central operations to the clandestine field and to such service functions as can clearly be performed better by a central unit than by the individual departments (but with provision for expansion of the central operations to take in added functions which, it may later appear, can be performed centrally with advantage).

11. One important practical difference between the two plans is the method of financing to be employed. The War Department plan calls for an independent budget for the central agency; the State Department plan calls for the funds for the central operation to be contributed by the three Departments involved and for the expenses of the coordinating mechanism to be borne by the State Department.

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to the Secretary of State

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